

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand five hundred and fifty-second plenary meeting

Held via videoconference, on Tuesday, 26 January 2021, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve..... (Belgium)

The President: I call to order the 1552nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Dear colleagues, before we proceed with our order of business of today, I would like first to warmly welcome a new colleague this morning, His Excellency Mr. Mxolisi Sizo Nkosi of South Africa. Ambassador, welcome, and let me assure you on my own behalf and on behalf of the Conference of our full support and cooperation.

I would also like to draw colleagues' attention to a letter circulated to you yesterday, encouraging your Governments to consider the possibility of addressing the 2021 session of the Conference at the ministerial level.

While this invitation extends to the entire 2021 session, Ms. Valovaya and I suggest that participating States address the Conference during the high-level week, which is the week of 22 February. State dignitaries will have the possibility to address the Conference via a pre-recorded video statement only. All video statements need to be in one of the six official languages of the United Nations and must be accompanied by written transcripts. States interested are requested to send the aforementioned video message to the secretariat before 15 February 2021.

Before we continue with the list of speakers remaining from the general debate of last Thursday, 21 January, I would like to consider two new requests from non-member States to participate in the work of the Conference that we received yesterday. The requests are contained in document CD/WP.631/Add.1. Any further requests from non-member States received after this date will be presented for your consideration and decision at future plenary meetings. My intention is to consider the list of States contained in document CD/WP.631/Add.1 as a whole. If there is no objection, may I take it that the Conference agrees that we proceed accordingly?

The Islamic Republic of Iran has the floor.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Good morning, dear colleagues, and thank you again, Mr. President. We request that the new requests be considered one by one, as has been the practice in past years.

The President: In light of the statement we have just heard, we will go through the list of countries requesting to participate as observers one by one, starting with the first country on the list, which is Singapore. May I take it that the Conference on Disarmament decides, in accordance with the rules of procedure, to accept this request to participate in its work?

It was so decided.

The President: We will now decide on the request from Yemen. May I take it that the Conference on Disarmament decides, in accordance with its rules of procedure, to accept this request to participate in its work?

It was so decided.

The President: I welcome these non-member States to the session of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has asked for the floor.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President. I wonder whether you were able to hear my previous interventions. I requested that the list of the new requests be considered one by one, as has been the practice in the past.

The President: Yes, we heard that statement, and that is what we did. We first took Singapore – there were no objections – and then we took Yemen, and again there were no objections.

It seems that you were not able to follow that. Can you confirm?

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you once again, Mr. President. Regarding the latter request, by Yemen, I would like to say that the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral

negotiating body devoted to disarmament, upholding the integrity and efficiency of this body. The inclusiveness of the Conference should be the top priority for all of its States members.

Yesterday, 25 January, was the International Day of Action on Yemen. The party that, in the name of Yemen, has requested the right to participate as an observer in the work of the Conference does not represent the great people or the State of Yemen. It can claim only to be representing the Saudi-led war coalition established to wage war on the Yemeni people and to inflict endless pain and suffering on the innocent population. Unfortunately, its members are complicit in the crimes committed by the infamous coalition against their fellow Yemeni citizens. A group of people who have effectively been held in captivity for six long years in the aggressor State's capital cannot speak for the Yemeni people. My delegation is not in a position to endorse this request.

The President: Well, I have a problem now, because we have already adopted the decision. I gavelled the request from Yemen. I asked whether there were any objections, and I paused quite a long time, because I was indeed expecting some reaction from the Islamic Republic of Iran, but there was not one.

I understand you are having technical problems and probably did not hear my question, so this is a bit of a difficult situation, but I think everyone understands that there are technical difficulties. I would thus ask for everybody's understanding and suggest that we go back to this request from Yemen. I will ask again whether the Conference on Disarmament decides to accept these requests to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure.

Are there any objections?

The Islamic Republic of Iran has the floor.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should go through again through my previous intervention. My delegation is not in a position to endorse this request. I thank you, Mr. President.

The President: Thank you. In view of the objection raised, there is no consensus on this request, and the request is therefore rejected.

Now, if there are no requests for the floor – there is one. Mexico has the floor.

Mr. Martínez Ruiz (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I am sorry to have to take the floor again regarding the consideration of requests from States to participate as observers in the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation is extremely concerned that, in its last three sessions, the Conference has abandoned the healthy practice of adopting such requests as a package and thus recognizing the importance of universal participation in disarmament issues.

We understand that there may be political differences between different States, but multilateral forums should be the ideal space for dialogue and understanding.

In no way can my delegation accept this policy of abusing the consensus rule to exclude the participation of delegations as observers in this forum. We therefore regret the decision of the Islamic Republic of Iran to reject the request of Yemen to participate as an observer, and we ask it to reconsider.

As we have mentioned in the past three years with regard to the issue of observers and other forms of State participation in the Conference, this extreme politicization is incompatible with the negotiating mandate of the body. Thank you.

The President: Thank you. I now give the floor to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): Thank you, Mr. President, I will be brief, because I agree with everything the delegate of Mexico has just said. My delegation deplores the decision by Iran to act as arbiter of who may or may not become observers of the Conference on Disarmament. The fact that it has blocked yet another sovereign United Nations Member State from exercising its right to do that is not in keeping with the principles of multilateralism or with the aims and objectives of this forum, and we strongly urge the Iranians to reconsider.

We also deplore the fact that this idea of going line by line through the list of prospective observer States is now being touted as established practice. It is not, and we strongly wish we could go back to the previous practice of simply agreeing the list and getting on with our business.

The President: Thank you. I now give the floor to India.

Mr. Sharma (India): Thank you, Mr. President. I have taken the floor to reiterate India's position that any United Nations Member State desiring to participate in the work of the Conference on Disarmament should be allowed that opportunity. And this is to ensure the universality of our work – the nature of the work that we conduct in the Conference on Disarmament, where we are going to negotiate legally binding instruments that have universal application.

Once again, I join my voice to those of the previous two speakers and I would appeal to you, Mr. President, to make an effort along the lines suggested by Ambassador Gabriëlse the other day – that is, you could undertake informal consultations with all States that are interested in participating in the work of the Conference as observers and the ones that have some difficulties with participation. Perhaps this issue could be sorted out with some effort on your part.

I thank you, Mr. President.

The President: Thank you. I now give the floor to the Netherlands.

We cannot hear the Netherlands, so we will go back to the Netherlands after I give the floor to the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Good morning, Mr. President, colleagues. I apologize for taking the floor. I would just like to express my delegation's concern about Iran's decision to block the request from the internationally recognized Government of Yemen. This is unfortunate. We need to end the politicization of requests for observer status, so I would call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to reverse its decision and allow Yemen to participate as an observer at this year's session. Thank you.

The President: Thank you. Let's go back to the Netherlands. You have the floor.

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): Thank you, Mr. President, first for your attempt to have another observer admitted to the Conference on Disarmament. It was my proposal the other day, and I really appreciate your attempt.

Along with my colleagues, who spoke for me, I want to voice my disappointment that a United Nations Member State has again been denied observer status. Perhaps I can echo the proposal by India and ask you, Mr. President, that we stop going through the list one by one, which, as the Ambassador of the United Kingdom said, is not a custom of this Conference.

As a proposal, I would like to ask you kindly whether you are willing to make a new attempt to see whether we can come to a solution that is satisfactory both to the prospective observers and to the Conference members that have objections. But again, Mr. President, I thank you very much for your effort.

The President: Thank you. I give the floor to Egypt.

Mr. Elsayed (Egypt): Mr. President, please excuse me for having to take the floor on this issue once again. It is very unfortunate that for the fourth time a non-member State has been denied the right to participate in work of the Conference on Disarmament.

I will not repeat what has been said by the previous speakers and what my delegation already stated in the previous session. Egypt's principled position on participation by non-member States is clear, and I want to express our full support for the requests for participation submitted by all United Nations Member States, including Yemen, Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President: Thank you.

(spoke in French)

I now give the floor to France.

Mr. Hwang (France) *(spoke in French)*: Good morning, Mr. President. Good morning, everybody. I would have preferred not to take the floor this morning, but the Islamic Republic of Iran obliges me to speak, and to do so for the record of our meeting. Like the colleagues who have spoken before me, my delegation believes that the Islamic Republic of Iran is persisting in its mistake. Multilateralism means inclusion, it means dialogue with everyone, and it constitutes the basis of diplomacy. We regret this abuse of the consensus rule and call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to reconsider its decision, just as we call on Turkey to reverse its decision to deny observer status to Cyprus. Thank you.

The President *(spoke in French)*: Thank you.

(spoke in English)

I now give the floor to Pakistan.

Mr. Omar (Pakistan): Mr. President, Pakistan supports the request by Yemen.

The President: Thank you.

(spoke in French)

I now give the floor to Morocco.

Mr. Kabbaj (Morocco) *(spoke in French)*: Mr. President, the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco regrets that participation as an observer has once again been denied to a United Nations Member State, in this case Yemen, and calls for the right to participate to be guaranteed for Yemen and for all other countries that have made requests.

The President *(spoke in French)*: Thank you. I give the floor to Canada.

Ms. Norton (Canada): Thank you very much, Mr. President. It is just to say that we would have preferred not to take the floor again on this issue, but we want to state for the record that we also regret this blocking of another United Nations Member State's legitimate request to have observer status here at the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: Thank you. I give the floor to South Africa.

Mr. Nkosi (South Africa): Mr. President, as you will recall, as a matter of principle, South Africa supports all requests by Member States of the United Nations for observer status at the Conference on Disarmament. If you recall, we warned in 2019, when the State of Palestine submitted its request to participate as an observer at the Conference, that the rejection of the request would set a bad precedent that would further undermine efforts to enhance the status of the Conference.

We are taking the floor simply to support all the delegations that have spoken thus far to endorse your earlier ruling to admit the countries that have requested to follow these proceedings as observers to the Conference. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President: Thank you. There are no more speakers on this issue. Once again, unfortunately, I have to express regret that one request for participation in our work has been rejected. I have been in contact since Tuesday, 19 January, with the interested parties and will remain so, but of course so far nothing has come of it. But, as I say, I will continue my efforts in my consultations.

Dear colleagues, we will now go back to the general debate and the speakers' list, but we first have two requests for rights of reply that we could not hear last Thursday. I suggest, then, that we start with these two and then move to the rest of the speakers' list.

I now give the floor to Germany for a right of reply. Please keep it short.

Mr. Beerwerth (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President. I will keep it short. I asked for the floor to set the record straight on the incorrect assertions of my Syrian colleague at last Thursday's meeting on the use of chemical weapons in Syria and the status of Syria's compliance under the Geneva Protocol of 1925, international customary law and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

And to preclude any allegations that this amounts to an unjustified politicization of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to recall two things: first, it is a matter of integrity for this body that the proper facts be written into the record, and, second, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body of the United Nations, the Conference on Disarmament not only negotiated and agreed on the Chemical Weapons Convention in the very Chamber in which we usually meet but also concluded those negotiations under the auspices of my predecessor Ritter von Wagner. This is why Germany has a particular affiliation to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Now, to the facts: on 9 July 2020, the competent international body on these matters, the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, stated in its decision:

The Executive Council [...] condemns the use of chemical weapons as reported by the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), which concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Syrian Arab Republic used chemical weapons [...].

[The Executive Council] expresses deep concern that the use of such chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic by direct implication establishes that the Syrian Arab Republic failed to declare and destroy all of its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities and demands that the Syrian Arab Republic immediately cease all use of chemical weapons.

[The Executive Council] expresses deep concern that the Syrian Arab Republic did not cooperate with and provide access to the IIT as required by United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and demands that the Syrian Arab Republic cooperate fully with the Secretariat.

In this decision, the Executive Council also repeated the demands for Syria to declare all its chemical weapons and its relevant facilities and to resolve all the outstanding issues regarding its initial declaration.

To this day, Mr. President, Syria has not complied with this request. Let me also remind you that the use of chemical weapons in Ltamenah in 2017, to which this decision relates, was not a singular incident. We have seen repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria, confirmed by the so-called Sellström mission in 2013, through various reports of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the Organisation and the United Nations.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I have to say that Syria has been in material breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and other relevant international laws and that has cost thousands of lives. Thank you.

The President: Thank you. I now give the floor to the Syrian Arab Republic for a right of reply. I would also like to ask the speaker to be as short as possible.

Mr. Ali (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. I asked for the floor to respond to the statement by the representative of Germany. He fell into the trap set by the representative of Israel, which aims to divert the debate in this negotiating forum to issues that are not on the agenda and to politicize the work of the Conference on Disarmament –

The President: Sorry to interrupt you, but I just received a message from the interpreters that they cannot translate you because of the poor quality of the sound. I suggest that we come back to you at the end of the morning's meeting and that we now return to the list of speakers for the general debate, the first of whom is the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Han Tae-song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Good morning, everybody. I warmly welcome new colleagues from Cuba, South Africa and other countries. I hope your new fresh blood will help revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I am very sorry to interrupt you, Ambassador, but I am afraid we also have a technical problem with you, so I suggest we continue with the next speaker while you

try to reconnect. Thank you very much for your understanding. I now give the floor to South Africa.

Mr. Nkosi (South Africa): Mr. President, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to express my appreciation for the way that you have conducted consultations on the draft package and wish to assure you of our full support and cooperation. I also wish to extend a word of appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, and the members of the secretariat for their ongoing support for the work of the Conference.

Since this is my first time participating in the work of the Conference as the new Permanent Representative and Ambassador of South Africa to the United Nations and other international organizations based in Geneva, allow me to express my sincere appreciation for the congratulatory messages and warm words of welcome that I have received from colleagues. It is indeed a great honour for me to represent my country in the Conference, and I look forward to working with all fellow Conference members in the weeks, months and years to come to advance the agenda of peace and security in the world.

South Africa is a strong proponent of nuclear disarmament and an ardent supporter of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are inextricably linked. Hence, we would like to emphasize the need to make progress on both these important areas.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force last Friday, 22 January 2021. And I would like to express my Government's appreciation to all the countries that have ensured the entry into force of the Treaty. I take this opportunity to urge all member States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. It fills a key remaining legal gap in international law regarding weapons of mass destruction by establishing a clear-cut prohibition of nuclear weapons in a manner fully supportive of and consistent with the existing multilateral nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and the principles and dictates of international humanitarian law and of the international law of human rights. A prohibition of nuclear weapons is the strongest commitment to nuclear disarmament.

The Treaty also contributes towards achieving the objectives set out in the very first resolution, adopted by the General Assembly in 1946, to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction and complements other international instruments by contributing towards the objectives of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the various treaties on zones free of nuclear weapons, such as the Treaty of Pelindaba, which has already banned nuclear weapons in Africa and fulfils the nuclear disarmament obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and should be preserved and strengthened. This should be done by ensuring that progress in a balanced manner across all three pillars of the Treaty is achieved.

We remain steadfast in our view that past commitments and the outcomes of the review conferences in 1995 and in 2000, further reconfirmed in 2010, remain valid until implemented. The 2020 NPT Review Conference was postponed to August 2021 due to measures introduced to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the pandemic has been a stark reminder to all of us that global challenges in an interconnected world can only be addressed effectively by a multilateral, coordinated response and that international peace and security cannot be divorced from development.

Global security is not achievable when enormous financial and other resources are still being diverted towards the acquisition of more and more destructive capabilities at a time when billions of people around the world continue to suffer from hunger, deprivation and the lack of access to the public good.

The humanitarian consequences posed by weapons of mass destruction are unacceptable, and the continued retention of the nuclear weapons option cannot be justified in the current circumstances. The only absolute guarantee against the use of such weapons is their complete elimination and the assurance that they will never be produced again.

I take up my new responsibilities at a difficult time in the history of this body here in Geneva, Mr. President, where indeed it has been a long time that the Conference has been denied the opportunity to fulfil its rightful role as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. After so many years of inaction, we have to reflect on the relevance of the Conference and whether it will be able to regain its position as a responsive multilateral institution that can contribute to building consensus on matters affecting our common security. My delegation stands ready to contribute constructively to ensure that the Conference regains its rightful position and role as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to assure you of my delegation's commitment to cooperating and working with you to ensure that we implement the programme of work that we have set for 2021. And, indeed, we hope that we will make tremendous progress insofar as negotiating outstanding issues that have been on the agenda of the Conference for a long time. I look forward to working with you and other members of the Conference in a collective effort to build a better world for all. I wish to assure you of my delegation's continued cooperation and support in the execution of the Conference's mandate.

I thank you for your attention Mr. President.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of South Africa and now give the floor again to the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Han Tae-song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the first presidency of the 2021 session of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you every success. My delegation is ready to extend its full support and cooperation during your presidency.

Last year, the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the work of the Conference, which holds an important mandate in the face of multiple challenges and in global disarmament. It is commendable that several presidencies tried to revitalize the work of the Conference by initiating proposals on a programme of work. However, to our regret, the Conference failed to reach a consensus.

This year, the Conference is again confronted with the challenges due to COVID-19, which shows no sign of scaling down, and this presents unpredictable constraints in organizing meetings and advancing our work. However, such circumstances should not stand as an obstacle or discourage us from moving forward. Rather, they require all Conference members to direct their efforts towards the common goal of embarking on substantive work. It is in this respect that my delegation welcomes the draft package proposed by the President. We are prepared to constructively engage in consultation with a view to adopting a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

The President: Ambassador, I am sorry. I am afraid we are losing you again. The interpreters cannot follow, so I will continue with the list of speakers and we will go back to you. Thank you very much.

The next speaker is the Ambassador of Cuba.

Mr. Quintanilla Román (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me first to thank you and other colleagues for your expressions of welcome following my recent arrival in Geneva. I assure you all of my willingness to work with you in a united manner and in the common interests of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would also like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference at this difficult time, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. I assure you that Cuba will work with the other members and with observers to promote a programme of work and an agenda for disarmament that responds to demands for peace and stability in today's world.

Cuba supports the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work in which complete nuclear disarmament is given the prominence it deserves, since nuclear weapons constitute a direct threat to the survival of humankind.

The paralysis in the work of this Conference is a direct reflection of the lack of political will of some States, will they lack either because they are in the business of

promoting arms races in pursuit of unilateral policies of aggression or because they are threatened by such policies.

This year, we have the additional challenge of working in the midst of an unrelenting pandemic, in a world characterized by a latent digital divide. Cuba must also contend with the challenge imposed by illegitimate measures that limit its access to Internet platforms.

Consequently, while calling on all States to work together towards an agenda of peace, non-proliferation and disarmament, we reiterate our rejection of unilateral coercive measures such as the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the Government of the United States. In particular, we condemn in the strongest possible terms the illegitimate and fraudulent inclusion of Cuba on the list of countries that the United States regards as sponsors of terrorism. Cuba does not recognize the authority of lists in which the United States Department of State designates countries in this way. Such lists are unilateral and have no international mandate or legitimacy. Everybody recognizes the truth, which is that Cuba is not a State sponsor of terrorism and that its conduct in the face of that scourge has been impeccable. We reject all forms and manifestations of terrorism, regardless of who commits it, who the intended victims are or where it is committed.

The Conference is prepared to negotiate several matters at the same time, including a treaty to eliminate and prohibit nuclear weapons, a treaty prohibiting an arms race in outer space, a treaty that would offer effective security assurances to States that, like Cuba, are not nuclear-weapon States and a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Similarly, it is a legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States that nuclear-weapon States provide unequivocal assurances not to use or threaten to use such weapons. We call for efforts to negotiate and to adopt, as quickly as possible, a universal and legally binding instrument on unconditional negative security assurances.

Let us take advantage of the momentum created by the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Nuclear disarmament is and must remain the highest disarmament priority. Nuclear weapons are illegal, and using them or threatening to use them should constitute, in the light of the principles of international law, the most serious international crimes that could be committed against humanity.

Finally, Mr. President, allow me to say that the mandate of this Conference is to act as a disarmament negotiating body, not as a deliberative platform from which to justify arms policies. Let us break this cycle of more than twenty years of being stuck in our own politics and without further delay adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of work to advance our efforts. Thank you very much.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Cuba and now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, thank you for giving me the floor. I would like to wish you all success in discharging your responsibility as the Conference on Disarmament's President and welcome those Ambassadors and colleagues recently appointed as their respective countries' representatives at the Conference.

We also wish everyone a promising new year in which the rule of law and responsible statecraft prevail. Every year, we begin with new hope for a better future, and 2021 is no exception. The new year can generate the momentum with which to turn a new page in the history of multilateralism, including in our multilateral negotiations towards nuclear disarmament, provided that all members, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, demonstrate genuine political will and take responsibility.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force on 22 January 2021 after it had been ratified by 50 States. This is a promising development for the realization of the aspiration of humanity for a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, 2020 was an ominous year not merely because of the ferocious viral pandemic but because of the increasing lawlessness and record-level militant unilateralism that did further damage to the global security climate – 2020 was a trying year for my nation

as well, as it had to cope with one of the worst pandemics, while at the same time resisting an unprecedented malicious campaign of economic and other coercive measures waged by the bullying Trump Administration.

In early January 2020, Iran and the whole region lost the antiterrorism hero and the most effective advocate of peace in the region, General Soleimani, to a brutal act of State terror in Baghdad. Months later, on 27 November 2020, our people had to mourn the loss of a prominent researcher, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who is credited with developing the first COVID-19 test kits in Iran, among his other scientific activities and services to the public. He was assassinated as part of a pattern of Israeli State terrorism that has long been targeting the scientific elites of the countries in the region. It is a bitter irony that the regime's representative, in her remarks before this body on 21 January, cried wolf about terrorism, international law and non-proliferation, as if the military of her side had the slightest regard for international law or moral norms.

The military occupier that does not feel bound by any civilized norm of engagement, that is not committed to any international disarmament instrument, that is not a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the only possessor of nuclear weapons in our region and the only obstacle to realizing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has no moral standing to talk about compliance. Only an establishment that is at the very epicentre of terrorism and is underpinned by embedded racism and that takes pride in stealing land by frequent military aggressions, massive massacres of civilians, demolition of civilian homes and the imprisonment and murder of young children can be so barefaced as to desecrate this audience by repeating shameless lies and false narratives about other nations that have been deeply rooted in the Earth for millennia.

The same regime that went to all extremes in its malign attempt to dismantle the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action blames Iran for non-compliance with the Plan. No one is going to be fooled by this smokescreen that you have mastered and use again and again – it is a caricature at the General Assembly and a worthless tirade here at the Conference on Disarmament.

Over the last year, the international security environment further deteriorated due mainly to an all-out provocative arms race across the spectrum that included upgrading of nuclear arsenals and development of new types of nuclear warheads, as well as an unprecedented rise in conventional military expenditures and arms sales in many parts of the world. More sophisticated armaments are pouring into the already volatile region of West Asia, keeping the Middle East a top destination for weapons and fuelling the atrocious ongoing conflicts across the region. The arms exporters continue to profit to the detriment of innocent people, who are brutalized by these weapons in our region.

Still, the most immediate and most increasingly acute threat to regional peace and security, as well as to its stability, comes from a single source – that is, the Israeli regime, which continues to accumulate all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, in particular a huge nuclear arsenal, without being subject to any accountability mechanism and by enjoying *carte blanche* from its supporters.

Seventy-six years after the use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total, irreversible and verifiable elimination. In the interim, the non-nuclear-weapon States do have a right to treaty-based negative security assurances. The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978 asked nuclear-weapon States to pursue efforts to conclude appropriate effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The same has been highlighted by the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), particularly in the 13 practical steps agreed on at the 2000 Review Conference and the action plan on nuclear disarmament agreed on at the 2010 Review Conference, which includes concrete steps for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The critical importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum cannot be overemphasized. It will be to the detriment of us all in the long run if we continue to fail to overcome the prolonged deadlock at the Conference. We look forward to working with you, Mr. President, and with other delegations in crafting

a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that encompasses all four of the Conference's core agenda items – namely, nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cut-off treaty, prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances.

The upcoming NPT Review Conference should provide extra motivation and momentum for all of us to pull together and make every effort to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament delivers. We have to learn from our past failures, avoid distraction of any sort and develop a programme of work that reflects the Conference on Disarmament's core mandate without tying it to controversial and unnecessary subjects.

We should all practise what we preach; otherwise, our words will have no meaning and may well be seen as hypocritical. For years, some actors have proclaimed themselves guardians of non-proliferation, smokescreening the very fact that they are the major proliferators. Naming Iran as a proliferation risk is as absurd as suggesting that Germany is an honest advocate for nuclear disarmament. It is not. Just a fact check: numerous tactical B61 nuclear bombs are stored for use by Germany under a nuclear weapons sharing agreement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in violation of articles I, II and VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Now, talking about weapons of mass destruction, I should hasten to mention that German companies were among those that provided Iraq with precursors to the chemical agents used by the Iraqi dictator to engage in chemical offensives against the Iranian military and civilians.

What about Iran? Does Iran have a single nuclear bomb? Has it not been under the most robust International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection regime for the past decade?

Iran's impeccable record as a practical believer in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is well known and sufficiently documented by IAEA's numerous reports verifying Iran's compliance with its voluntary obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Iran persisted in responsibly implementing the Plan of Action quite one-sidedly following the unilateral withdrawal by the United States. From May 2018, when the United States unilaterally pulled out of the agreement in violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), to May 2019, Iran continued to fully implement its commitments without any pause. Iran's decision to scale back its voluntary commitments was in strict accordance with the terms of paragraphs 26 and 36 of the Plan of Action and in response to continuing significant non-performance by the other participants. And this was all while France, Germany and the United Kingdom had already ceased to honour their commitments under pressure from the United States. Had it not been for Iran's responsible stance, resilience, endurance and perseverance, the Plan of Action would have collapsed much earlier.

The European Union representative's remarks on the Plan of Action on 19 January were therefore underwhelming, to say the least. It is time for France, Germany and the United Kingdom to own up to their mishaps and avoid shirking their responsibilities by peddling self-serving narratives about the current situation of the Plan of Action. Those who contributed to this situation by choosing to appease the bullying Administration should bear the responsibility for all the consequences instead of shifting the blame to the genuinely compliant party.

Iran's remedial measures can be reversed as soon as all participants in the Plan of Action respect their obligations, not in words or for publicity but in practice and for the good of the rule of law and in accordance with the principle *pacta sunt servanda*. I thank you, Mr. President.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The delegation of Israel has raised a point of order.

Ms. Maayan (Israel): Thank you. I apologize for taking the floor. We demand that the Islamic Republic of Iran refer to us by our official name, the State of Israel. Thank you.

The President: I thank the representative of Israel. We now go back to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Ambassador, you have the floor. May I ask you perhaps not to repeat from the start but to take it from where you were interrupted?

Mr. Han Tae-song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor again. I will start with the position of my country.

Mr. President, there is no country on this planet that is exposed to such a constant threat of war as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or whose people's desire for peace is so strong. The Government of the country has made every effort to prevent aggravation of regional tension out of a strong desire to ensure peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and in the rest of the world. However, high-tech weapons of hostile forces aimed at our State are increasing in number, and the reckless arms build-up undermines the international balance of power.

Reality shows that only when we bolster our national defence capability without a moment's halt will we be able to contain the military threat and achieve peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, it is a firm determination of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to continuously strengthen the country's military capabilities as long as the danger of war of aggression by hostile forces against our State remains and until such woes as threats and blackmail by hostile forces disappear from this land.

Steadily developing the strongest war deterrent is aimed at defending ourselves and opening up an era of genuine peace free from war forever. And the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as a responsible nuclear-weapon State, will not misuse its nuclear weapons unless the aggressive hostile forces try to use nuclear weapons against us.

As Kim Jong-un, General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, clarified in his recent historic report at the Congress of the Party, it is the steadfast will of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reliably defend peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the rest of the world.

During last week's plenary meetings, some countries, in addition to the European Union, took issue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in their statements. Their baseless allegations do not deserve any response, as they are the result of deliberate ignorance or a lack of understanding of the reality on the Korean Peninsula.

Let me turn to remarks by Japan. The current Constitution of Japan, which is a country that was defeated in the Second World War, prohibits Japan from maintaining even regular military forces. However, Japan has been openly accelerating its plan to become a military Power in the region. The world still remembers the horrible catastrophe it inflicted upon the people of Asia in the first half of the twentieth century. We should keep an eye on Japan's attempt to realize its foolish, wild dream of becoming a regional Power by denying its past crimes. Japan should abandon its ambition to become a military Power before pointing fingers at others.

It is necessary for the South Korean authorities to put an end to all acts hostile to the other, take a serious approach to North-South declarations and faithfully implement them. The prospect of inter-Korean relations depends entirely on the attitudes of the South Korean authorities. I thank you.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and now give the floor to the Ambassador of Ukraine.

Mr. Klymenko (Ukraine): Good morning, Mr. President. Since this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, I would like to start by extending my warmest congratulations to you on the assumption of your duties and wishing you every success in this endeavour. The Ukrainian delegation supports your ambitions to further search for common ground regarding the programme of work and considers your recent initiatives valuable and necessary as we strive towards our common goal related to the resumption of our work negotiating legally binding disarmament instruments.

Please be assured, Mr. President, of my delegation's full cooperation with you to advance the objectives of the Conference on Disarmament in these incredibly challenging circumstances of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I would also like to welcome all newly arrived colleagues and wish them inspiration for the sake of achieving our eventual common aim of a safer world.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, since my country was mentioned in the context of the Russian aggression in the statement delivered on 19 January 2021 by Ambassador Marshall Billingslea, I would like to thank the United States for its unwavering support for and solidarity with Ukraine. For my part, I have to highlight that this aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine is of an ongoing nature. Let me remind you that as of today about 44,000 km², or some 7 per cent of the territory of Ukraine, is still under foreign occupation, in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Over 15,000 people have been killed and more than 30,000 wounded. These are the consequences of the aggression. Even the ceasefire, which has largely been holding in Donbass since July 2020, remains very fragile. Recent developments in Donbass prove that Russia is not willing to engage constructively and in good faith in the peace process.

Hostilities and violence on the ground committed by the Russian occupation forces, almost on an everyday basis, jeopardize these fragile process, as well as dramatically decrease the safety and security of the civilian population, which continues to suffer. The temporary occupation and attempted annexation of parts of Ukraine's territory, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and certain areas of Donbass remain the most severe challenge to the security architecture in Europe.

Ukraine shares the assessment of the United States delegation that the current global arms control infrastructure has been deeply corroded by the actions of countries such as the Russian Federation. I have repeatedly drawn attention to the progressive threatening militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea by the Russian Federation. What is more alarming is that we continue to receive varying reports that air and maritime means of delivery of nuclear weapons have been moved from Russia to Crimea. Moreover, the Russian Federation has also brought the relevant nuclear infrastructure into active engagement. All those facts infringed the nuclear-free status of the Peninsula.

In this way, the strict implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 75/29 of 7 December 2020, entitled "Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov", is of paramount importance.

I will not tire of reiterating the negative impact on the global security architecture caused by the blatant violation by the Russian Federation of the Budapest Memorandum, especially against the backdrop of the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. But it is not only the Budapest Memorandum – Russia is also in persistent breach of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention in the context of its aggression against Ukraine, as has been regularly highlighted by Ukraine, with updated data, on relevant platforms.

The violation by the Russian Federation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty significantly undermined regional and international stability. The repeated use of a Novichok group military-grade nerve agent to assassinate unwanted individuals indicates another gross violation by the Russian Federation of its obligations with respect to another key element of the international non-proliferation regime – this time, the Chemical Weapons Convention. Ukraine fully trusts the published results of toxicological tests on samples from Alexei Navalny carried out by the laboratories designated by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and reconfirms its solid stance that those responsible for such severe violations of the Convention must not go unpunished.

The Russian Federation continues its massive illicit transfers of military goods to our territory, thus deliberately destabilizing not only subregional but also overall European security, and totally ignoring persistent calls by the international community for it to establish effective border controls. Among other things, such illegal transfers are a great challenge to the proper implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, which serves as the only universal international tool to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The most recent example of the Russian so-called adherence to existing legal norms revealed itself on 15 January 2021, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation announced the beginning of the procedure for Russia's withdrawal from the Treaty on Open Skies. As a matter of fact, the Russian Federation had been flagrantly

violating the Treaty in 2019 and 2020 by, among other things, reducing the area open to surveillance flights due to Russia's occupation of parts of Ukraine and Georgia.

We consider this decision yet another example of Russia's foreign policy aiming to dismantle the European security architecture, disrupt the international arms control regime and undermine the fundamental norms and principles of international law. I would like to echo the United States representative by calling upon the Russian Federation to hit the ground running and extend the New START, provided that Russia stops its arms racing.

Given everything mentioned above, it is especially outrageous that the State which fails to comply with almost every single arms control regime seeks to play a leading role in advancing the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We cannot turn a blind eye to that.

International peace and security cannot be maintained, and new norms cannot be developed, if conflicts are fuelled and international law is violated. We are convinced that the disarmament and non-proliferation regime can be effectively strengthened, first of all through the proper and timely implementation and faithful promotion of the respective international legal frameworks. The problem of restored trust is the key to further advancement of disarmament and international security.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, Ukraine strongly believes that effective multilateralism should remain the basic principle for negotiations in addressing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Our State stands ready to continue contributing practically to achieve this goal. Ukraine considers the Conference on Disarmament an important multilateral forum for disarmament and arms control negotiations, a forum that makes it possible to maintain political dialogue and promote practical cooperation.

Ukraine supports resumption of the substantive work of the Conference in order to commence talks on a range of important agreements, including a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and a legally binding instrument on security assurances providing States without nuclear weapons guarantees against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

Against the backdrop of increasing challenges and threats to international peace and security, Ukraine advocates strict adherence to the provisions of all key international instruments in this field. It is a priority task for United Nations Member States to find practical ways to ensure that international legal norms related to non-proliferation and arms control exist not just on paper but are also properly enforced and fully respected.

That is especially relevant in view of an important task we have this year: to sum up, in the course of the respective review conferences, the five-year periods of operation of the key components of the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regime – namely, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention – as well as to shape their future.

To conclude, allow me to reiterate Ukraine's belief that in order to move forward in the field of disarmament, we have to, first of all, ensure the compliance of all United Nations Member States with the existing arms control and non-proliferation international instruments, while preventing their further erosion. That has to be confirmed by concrete actions. This, for its part, will facilitate the rebuilding of trust and confidence, key pillars of our productive work here in the Conference on Disarmament.

Ukraine will continue contributing to genuine endeavours aimed at achieving the goals and objectives of the Conference as a vital element of the rules-based international order and, as a reliable and responsible partner, is looking forward to working closely with you, Mr. President, and all willing member States in order to find a breakthrough as soon as possible. I thank you.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Ukraine. I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Ms. Gunawardena (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, at the outset, the delegation of Sri Lanka wishes to congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the 2021 session of the Conference on Disarmament. Our delegation assures you and the other members of the group of the six Presidents of the annual session of its full support and

cooperation with a view to finding common ground for the fulfilment of the Conference's obligations with regard to strengthening international peace and security. We are encouraged by the approach of the six presidencies working together as a team in this regard. Sri Lanka aligns itself with the statement of the Group of 21 delivered by the Ambassador of Indonesia at the previous meeting.

Mr. President, our delegation notes with appreciation the package proposal presented by you on behalf of the six Presidents. We affirm our full support for your efforts to develop this package through a consultative process and reach consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work with a view to resuming multilateral disarmament negotiations, which we have failed to achieve for far too long.

Sri Lanka has been an active player in the field of disarmament for long years. We are pleased to recall that Sri Lanka's presidency of the Conference in 2018 was able to once again make a meaningful contribution to this process through the adoption of the decision contained in document CD/2119 in February 2018. We take this opportunity to urge all members of the Conference to work with renewed commitment and a sense of urgency, demonstrating maximum flexibility, to support the efforts of the six Presidents of the Conference in 2021.

The year 2021 presents unprecedented challenges for all of us as the world continues to fight a deadly pandemic. This situation brings home the most pertinent question of whether security regimes based only on exotic weapons are the best measure to achieve sustainable human security. We are concerned about the rapidly deteriorating international arms control and security regime, which would have a profound impact on humankind that would outlast the pandemic itself, bringing in other vulnerabilities to heightened realities. We also note with concern the lack of progress on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the inability of States to work together to advance the non-proliferation goals of the Treaty in the run-up to the tenth NPT Review Conference this year.

Modernization of nuclear arsenals, as well as a move by some States to include new low-yield nuclear weapons in their national security strategies and postures, is of concern. It appears that nuclear-possessing States, instead of implementing coordinated measures to abandon their nuclear weapons arsenals, are moving more towards expansion and modernization. The advancement of autonomous weapons systems and related emerging technologies devoid of meaningful human control also remains a matter of concern. Early commencement of negotiation of binding limitations on and regulation of such weapons systems is an absolute necessity.

We note the importance of continuing serious dialogue in good faith among all parties concerned in the interest of international peace and security of all people. However, we remain hopeful that our collective efforts will lead to concrete results and that we will continue to build on the positive work we have achieved so far as we endeavour to understand the legitimate security concerns of all States and how we can narrow our differences.

We sincerely hope, Mr. President, that your inclusive approach and willingness to engage across regional groups will help generate momentum for the work ahead. It is our earnest hope that the Conference will be able to untie its Gordian knot, at least this year, so that we can decide how best we could utilize our meagre resources to optimum advantage in the best interest of humankind. I thank you, Mr. President.

The President: I thank the representative of Sri Lanka. We still have a few speakers on the list, but we also have three requests for rights of reply for this morning, so I propose that we take these three rights of reply now. The interpreters have indicated that they are willing to stay for a few more minutes, but I would really want to ask the three delegates in question to keep their statements as short as possible.

The first one is the Syrian Arab Republic. You have the floor.

Mr. Ali (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to remind the representative of Germany that all matters related to the Syrian chemical weapons issue are discussed by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague and that this is not the forum for such discussions. The allegations made by Germany regarding the Syrian chemical weapons dossier are unfounded because

the conclusions of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have been repeatedly called into question, not only by outside experts but also by those who have participated in investigative activities from within the Organisation. In general, the public has many questions for the Organisation and its Executive Board, and we believe that those questions need to be answered in order to restore the credibility of the Organisation.

Syria strongly condemns any use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, by anyone, under any circumstances and anywhere. Syria asserts that it has not used and will not use chemical weapons because it no longer possesses them. In 2013, Syria acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention and since then has fulfilled its obligations arising from the Convention despite the difficult circumstances it has experienced and the enormous challenges posed by terrorism, occupation and acts of aggression. In her June 2014 report to the Security Council, the coordinator of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission, Ms. Sigrid Kaag, confirmed that Syria had fulfilled its full commitments and that its stocks of these weapons had been destroyed on board United States and other Western vessels.

The claims made by German officials regarding the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria are mostly based on video footage circulated on social media and the questionable testimony of supposed witnesses on the ground and circulated by the so-called Syrian opposition based outside Syria and organizations such as the terrorist White Helmets, which formed the basis for the reports of the OPCW investigation team. Germany has maintained its anti-Syrian rhetoric despite all the obvious contradictions and evidence to the contrary presented by Syria, Russia and independent experts.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that in 2020, Germany provided €5.1 million in assistance to the White Helmets, one of the branches of Jabhat al-Nusrah, a terrorist organization on the Security Council lists of terrorist entities. The White Helmets are the prime suspects in the incidents involving the use of chemical weapons in Syria, yet they receive financial support from Germany. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President: Thank you. I now give the floor to Germany.

Mr. Beerwerth (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President. I am sorry that I requested the floor again, but I absolutely need to respond, even if but briefly, to the statement of my distinguished Iranian colleague, and even more briefly, to the statement just now by my Syrian colleague.

I only took the floor on the Syrian chemical weapons issue because it was my Syrian colleague who spoke on it first, so it is surprising that he criticizes me for doing that after he had introduced the topic. But be that as it may.

With regard to the intervention by my distinguished Iranian colleague, I cannot but express my utter surprise and confess that I am appalled. And I have to say that I reject this accusatory language. I am sorry to hear that my Iranian colleague spoke in such an unprofessional and derogatory manner about my country. But, as a very famous lady once said, if others go low, we go high. So I will just keep my remarks brief.

First, nuclear-sharing has been in existence for approximately half a century or even a little longer. It is completely in line with international law, and the question arises: why is Iran raising this issue now? The reason is instantly clear to any reasonable observer.

Second, not addressing Israel by its official and proper name flies in the face, I would think, of the respect due a sovereign country and a United Nations Member State. Why does my distinguished Iranian colleague deviate from that respect now? It is instantly clear to any reasonable observer.

Third, with regard to the exports of German companies to Iraq, those cases happened in the early 1980s, forty years ago. The German judiciary successfully went after those responsible for those exports at the time. Export regulations were subsequently strengthened substantially at both the national and international levels. Why does Iran raise these allegations now more than forty years later? It is clear to any reasonable observer why. I do not need to comment further. I thank you, Mr. President.

The President: Thank you. I now give the floor to Japan.

Mr. Ogasawara (Japan): I would like to exercise a right of reply to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. First, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and missile development is in clear violation of a series of Security Council resolutions that urge the country to abandon all nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles programmes.

It is our greatest hope that ongoing diplomatic efforts will lead to the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is a common goal that we all share under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The claims concerning Japan are groundless. I would like to emphasize that for over seventy years, Japan has regarded its history in a spirit of humility. It has consistently respected democracy and human rights and contributed to the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and the international community. On the issue of Japan's defence capability, Japan has adhered to the basic precept of maintaining an exclusively defence-oriented policy under its Constitution.

Japan will never change the course it has taken as a peace-loving nation. Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should work to bring true peace to North-East Asia by overcoming mutual mistrust and deepening cooperation with each other. Japan would like to call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to share this approach and to work together to seek a bright future. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President: Thank you. I now give the floor to the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor, but I need to exercise my right of reply to the comments made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran has claimed many times in this forum that it is committed to multilateralism. Well, let me just remind everyone that it is Iran that has blocked Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen from observing the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament.

Please recall in previous years Tehran's threats to eradicate Israel, a United Nations Member State, from the face of the Earth. It has committed countless acts of terrorism around the world. Many States members of the Conference have been victims of Iran's practice of terrorism. It exports terrorism through the funding of proxies and the proliferation of missiles, particularly ballistic missiles. Its current posture vis-à-vis the implementation of its obligations to the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) is of growing concern to the entire international community.

We call on Iran to fully comply with its IAEA obligations. And for the sake of time, I will end it there, Mr. President. Thank you.

The President: Thank you. In the meantime, I have received a new request for a right of reply from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. You have the floor.

Mr. Han Tae-song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President. This is in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by Japan.

The stupid remarks made by Japan to try to hide its militarization are quite deplorable. Japan, which has built immense military capabilities under the pretext of threats from someone, remains unchanged in its ambition to control the neighbouring countries so as to be a regional Power. No one can predict when Japan will start a new war of reinvasion.

It is quite clear to all that Japan's attempts to become a military Power will be another terrible catastrophe for regional peace and stability because Japan is a war-crime State which turned Korea – which turned Asia – into a sea of blood and started the Pacific War in the last century and has evaded responsibility for past crimes. I thank you.

The President: Thank you. Dear colleagues, this concludes this morning's meeting. I would like to thank the interpreters for staying a bit longer with us. We will resume at 3 p.m. and will start with the Russian Federation and then will have Switzerland and Nigeria and that will then conclude the general debate and then we will move to the discussion on the package proposal. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.